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on Monday, 22 July 1996, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. GERVAIS (Côte d'Ivoire)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES, CONFERENCES AND RELATED QUESTIONS (continued) (A/51/203-E/1996/86)

(c) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS (A/51/212; A/51/166-E/1996/67, A/51/171-E/1996/75; E/1996/85)

Mr. SAMANA (Papua New Guinea), Acting Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, said that the continuing cooperation of members of the Council, as well as the close working relationship which the Council, the Special Committee and organizations within the United Nations system had maintained through the years, had greatly contributed to bringing about concrete programmes of assistance beneficial to the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The remaining Territories on the list to which the Declaration applied were small island Territories with small populations and limited natural resources. The General Assembly had reiterated in numerous resolutions that those factors should in no way prevent the peoples of those Territories from exercising their inalienable right to self-determination and independence in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration. While the Special Committee continued to adhere firmly to those principles, it realized that accelerated economic and social development could only contribute to the speedy implementation of the Declaration.

The Special Committee hoped that the Council would continue to review appropriate measures to coordinate the policies and activities of the United Nations system concerning the Territories. In general, the specialized agencies and organizations had continued to assist the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in response to relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the Council and the Special Committee, in some cases from within their own budgetary resources. In addition, a number of assistance projects continued to be funded

by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in close collaboration with agencies and organizations of the United Nations system.

During a regional seminar held at Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, from 12 to 14 June 1996, the Special Committee had had an opportunity to hear the representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories speak on various problems affecting their political, economic and social development and on the development options available to them. The issues discussed at the seminar had included: the problems of small, structurally open economies; food production; the development of financial management expertise; the implications for island Territories of issues pertaining to the environment and development; international and regional cooperation to mitigate the effects of natural disasters; the role of international and regional organizations in the development of the Territories; the access of Non-Self-Governing Territories to programmes and activities of the United Nations system; and areas in which regional cooperation needed to be strengthened. It had been recognized that, since most of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories were small islands with vulnerable ecosystems, the programmes of assistance should be formulated by the administering Powers in cooperation with UNDP and other relevant organizations, bearing in mind the specific needs of those Territories.

The small island Territories required increased assistance from all international institutions to prepare the people for the exercise of their right to self-determination. At the midpoint of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, it was time for a concerted international effort to fully achieve the goals set forth in the Declaration.

Mr. HAMDAN (Lebanon) said that his delegation endorsed the work of the Special Committee and believed that the elimination of colonialism should remain a top priority of the United Nations.

The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should take note of the report of the President of the Council on consultations held with the Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in document E/1996/85.

It was so decided.

(d) HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS (A/51/41, A/51/189; E/1996/82 and Add.1, E/1996/87; E/1996/L.18 and Add.1)

Mr. AYALA-LASSO (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights), introducing the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in document E/1996/87, said that the fifty-second session of the Commission on Human Rights had been opened by the Secretary-General and attended by high-level Government representatives, including foreign ministers; there had been active participation of non-governmental organizations. The debate in the Commission had been marked by a spirit of consensus, and 90 per cent of its resolutions and decisions had been adopted without a vote, including resolution 1996/15 on the right to development and the decision to establish an intergovernmental group of experts to elaborate a strategy for the implementation and promotion of the right to development.

The promotion of the right to development was a high priority of the Office of the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights. In that connection, he had arranged a meeting in July 1996 with the executive secretaries of the regional commissions to discuss how the United Nations human rights programme and the work of the regional commissions could be coordinated to effectively promote the right to development. Other activities, including seminars and workshops, had been planned with a view to finding practical ways to implement the right to development at the national and international levels.

The cooperation between Governments and the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations human rights programme was a decisive factor in the worldwide efforts to make human rights a reality. The United Nations human rights programme was continuing its field work in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatia and had recently established an office in Yugoslavia. It was providing human rights training for the international civilian police and the monitors of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, was assisting the High Representative responsible for civilian aspects of the peace implementation and was supporting the work of the Special Rapporteur and the expert in charge of the special process dealing with missing persons in the former Yugoslavia. His Office was closely following the situation in Burundi and had opened an office in Bujumbura in June 1994 which provided technical assistance and promoted human rights among various groups of Burundi society. The Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda (HRFOR) was continuing its work and, since the withdrawal of

the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda, had become the largest United Nations presence in the country. In accordance with the resolutions of the competent organs of the United Nations, his Office was continuing operations for the establishment of a field presence in Abkhazia, Georgia, and in Colombia and Zaire. He commended the countries, including South Africa, Mexico and Tunisia, which had contributed funds earmarked for human rights field activities.

Several international meetings relevant to human rights, including the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), the Conference on Refugees, Returnees, Displaced Persons and Related Migratory Movements within the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States and the Third Annual Meeting of Special Rapporteurs/ Representatives/Experts and Chairmen of the Working Groups of the Commission on Human Rights, had made significant contributions to the human rights debate. His Office had recently supported the participation of 25 of the leading human rights education experts from all regions in a seminar organized by the Government of Costa Rica to discuss practical recommendations for the implementation of the plan of action of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education.

In the context of system-wide savings measures, the regular budget resources available to the United Nations human rights programme had been reduced by $2.6 million in both post and non-post items. The effectiveness of that programme depended on an adequate and reliable mix of regular resources and voluntary contributions. He appealed to the international community to take advantage of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to give a new impetus to the promotion and protection of human rights.

Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica) commended the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and said that her delegation shared his views on the importance of dialogue with Governments. To that end, her Government had organized a seminar on the pedagogical foundations of human rights education, bringing together experts in the field of human rights education.

(f) SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONS (continued) (E/1996/29; E/1996/NGO/5; E/1996/CRP.2)

Ms. GORDON (Jamaica) said that her delegation supported the draft resolution which the Commission for Social Development was recommending for

adoption by the Council concerning follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the future role of the Commission for Social Development. The provisions relating to the membership, frequency and duration of sessions of the Commission were a logical extension of the expanded mandate entrusted to it by the Council, which should therefore adopt the draft resolution.

Document E/1996/29 demonstrated that the Commission had already begun seriously to address its responsibilities with respect to the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. The most tangible way in which delegations could demonstrate support for progress in the field of social development was by including experts among their members and by actively participating in the Commission's sessions. Future debate on social development questions should focus on strategies for addressing the problems identified.

Ms. PARK (Observer for the Republic of Korea) said that the ambitious goals established at the World Summit for Social Development could be realized only if the commitments and initiatives agreed upon at the Summit were implemented through the consolidated efforts of Governments and the international community. To that end, the interaction between the General Assembly, the Council and the Commission for Social Development must be further coordinated and strengthened and her delegation therefore welcomed the draft resolution adopted by the Commission at its special session. However, it was disappointed at the number of seats allocated to Asian countries, which should not be considered a precedent for membership distribution in other United Nations organs. Her delegation welcomed the initiative to open debate in the Commission to experts and actors of civil society, as they would make a positive contribution to the Commission's work.

Her delegation supported Commission resolution S-1996/1 on strategies and actions for the eradication of poverty. The goals of poverty eradication and the promotion of economic and human development must be pursued simultaneously. Particular attention should be paid to the impact of rapid globalization and increased trade liberalization on various sectors of society and on the developing countries. The goal of poverty eradication called for broad-based development policies, the mobilization of resources through the coordinated efforts of developed and developing countries, and decisive international action.

Ms. VON ROEMER (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)) said that the International Confederation attached great importance to the role of the Commission for Social Development in the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. It had participated in the Commission's special session and was pleased that innovative work methods, such as panel discussions, had been used. However, in view of the high hopes raised by the World Summit for Social Development, which thus far had been largely unfulfilled, ICFTU was disappointed that the Commission had not adopted more action-oriented conclusions on the question of the eradication of poverty. The terms of reference of the Commission in the draft resolution before the Council, which included practical measures aimed at furthering the recommendations of the Summit, gave reason to hope that the Commission would be able to carry out its crucial functions in that regard.

ICFTU looked forward to the 1997 session of the Commission, which would focus on productive employment and sustainable livelihoods. It hoped that, pursuant to paragraph 25 (b) of the draft resolution recommended to the Council, experts from the trade union movement would be included in the panels to be selected and in government delegations. That would make the effective partnership between Governments and the relevant actors of civil society called for in paragraph 8 a reality.

In conclusion, she said that ICFTU welcomed the remarks at the preceding meeting by the representative of Ireland, speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Union, concerning the role of the International Labour Organization (ILO) at the Commission's next session.

Mr. GABOURY (World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU)) said that the changes taking place in the international environment were arguably the most fundamental redesign of the world's political and economic arrangements since the industrial revolution. In the name of deregulation and harmonization, governance was being transferred from nations to transnational corporations, whose gross revenues in many cases exceeded the gross domestic product of all but a handful of countries. Since the end of the Gulf War, much had been heard about a "new world order", while in reality there was nothing new and little order. Instead, the world was witnessing the return of attempts by multinational corporations, aided by compliant Governments and the Bretton Woods institutions, to fasten the noose of exploitative relations around the entire

globe. The biggest losers were working people, and the World Federation trusted that the Council's mandate included speaking and acting in defence of their interests. WFTU did not look forward to a "globalization" wherein the fortunes of the fortunate were enhanced at the expense of the unfortunate.

The dramatic events in the political, social and economic fields during the past decade - and the attendant profound economic and social crisis - provided valuable lessons. Follow-up activities to the World Summit for Social Development should include an examination of the shock therapy treatment that had been imposed on the economies in transition. Consideration also should be given to the impact of the structural adjustment policies which had been imposed by the International Monetary Fund on developing countries, often contributing to a situation in which health care, education and, sometimes, food were beyond the reach of hundreds of millions of people.

The United States-sponsored blockade of Cuba and the imposition of sanctions against third parties under the Helms-Burton Act constituted violations of international trade law and a gross violation of the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. All nations must respect those principles. Only in that way would the commitments undertaken at Copenhagen be achieved, thus giving meaning to the International Year and the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty.

Mr. KOZIY (Observer for Ukraine) said that the Commission for Social Development should play a key role in developing policies and coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the decisions adopted at the World Summit for Social Development. With regard to the draft resolution which the Commission recommended to the Council for adoption, his delegation attached particular importance to the involvement of relevant groups and experts in the follow-up to the Summit and agreed that consultations should be held with the Administrative Committee on Coordination, the Bretton Woods institutions, ILO and the United Nations funds and programmes for the purpose of enhancing cooperation in the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. The methods of work of the Commission would benefit from the convening of open-ended informal consultations. With respect to documentation, he said that the submission of high-quality documents by the Secretariat in a timely fashion was very important for the Commission's work. The question of the membership of the

Commission and the periodicity of its sessions should be discussed within the framework of the reform of the United Nations system.

Greater attention should be devoted to strengthening mechanisms for cooperation among the agencies of the United Nations system in order to avoid duplication of work and enhance the efficient use of human and financial resources, particularly in the light of the serious financial crisis facing the United Nations.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on the draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the future role of the Commission for Social Development", the programme budget implications of which were set forth in annex IV to the report of the Commission (E/1996/29).

Mr. SHAPIRO (United States of America) requested a recorded vote on paragraphs 16 and 17 of the draft resolution and on the text as a whole.

Mr. HAMDAN (Lebanon), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that although his delegation would vote in favour of paragraph 16, it was disappointed that only 10 seats had been allocated to Asian States, a provision that should not set a precedent for the future allocation of seats for regional groups in the United Nations.

A recorded vote was taken on paragraph 16 of the draft resolution.

In favour: Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Czech Republic, Egypt, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Greece, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Jamaica, Jordan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Senegal, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Zimbabwe.

Against: United States of America.

Abstaining: Australia, Belarus, Japan, Russian Federation.

Paragraph 16 of the draft resolution was adopted by 46 votes to 1, with 4 abstentions.

A recorded vote was taken on paragraph 17 of the draft resolution.

In favour: Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Greece, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Jamaica, Jordan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Senegal, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Zimbabwe.

Against: United States of America.

Abstaining: Australia, Belarus, Czech Republic, Japan, Netherlands, Russian Federation.

Paragraph 17 of the draft resolution was adopted by 44 votes to 1, with 6 abstentions.*

Mr. SHAPIRO (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that his delegation would be unable to support the draft resolution because it was inconsistent with efforts to reform the United Nations and rein in expenditures. It was unnecessary to increase the membership of the Commission; there was no demonstrated need for the Commission to meet annually to accomplish its work; nor was there any evidence that the member States were prepared to upgrade their participation in the Commission so as to give more substance to its deliberations.

A recorded vote was taken on the draft resolution as a whole.

In favour: Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Czech Republic, Egypt, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Senegal, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, Togo,

* The delegation of the Netherlands subsequently informed the Council that it had intended to vote in favour of the paragraph.

Tunisia, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Zimbabwe.

Against: United States of America.

Abstaining: None.

The draft resolution was adopted by 51 votes to 1.

Mr. GUBAREVICH (Belarus), said that his delegation favoured strengthening the ability of the Commission to carry out its responsibilities with respect to the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development. To that end, the Commission should make better use of available resources and improve its methods of work. Any reforms should be financed from existing resources. Accordingly, although his delegation supported most of the provisions of the resolution just adopted relating to the role of the Commission and the enhancement of its effectiveness, it had not agreed that its membership should be increased or that it should hold more frequent sessions.

Ms. SAIGA (Japan) said that her delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole but had abstained in the votes on paragraphs 16 and 17. Her delegation agreed that the Commission should be revitalized and strengthened so that it could better fulfil its responsibilities concerning the follow-up to the Copenhagen Summit. Those goals should be attained through rationalization and improved methods of work, not by increasing the number of members or holding more frequent sessions.

At a time of budgetary difficulties, it was particularly important to carefully consider financial implications of proposed institutional arrangements, since they could affect future activity. In her delegation's view, the draft resolution must be implemented using existing resources. In conclusion, she pledged her delegation's continued commitment to the work of the Commission.

Ms. WONG (Australia) said that her delegation supported the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit and had voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole. It would have supported paragraphs 16 and 17 if assurances had been provided that the costs of their implementation would be absorbed within existing resources.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on draft decision I entitled "Establishment of a support group to assist the Commission for Social Development in the preparations for the International Year of Older Persons

in 1999" (E/1996/29, chap. I.B). The draft decision had no programme budget implications. He took it that the Council wished to adopt the draft decision.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT drew attention to draft decision II entitled "Report of the Commission for Social Development on its special session of 1996 and provisional agenda and documentation for the thirty-fifth session of the Commission" (E/1996/29, chap. I.B). He took it that the Council wished to take note of the report of the Commission for Social Development on its special session of 1996.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT said he took it that the Council approved the provisional agenda and documentation for the thirty-fifth session of the Commission as set out in draft decision II.

It was so decided.

(e) ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued) (A/51/16 (Part I), A/51/38; E/1996/16, E/1996/26, E/1996/39, E/1996/56, E/1996/71, E/1996/82; E/1996/NGO/3 and NGO/6)

Mr. GUBAREVICH (Belarus) said that his delegation believed that the Commission on the Status of Women should be the main coordinating mechanism for the implementation of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, and that its role should be strengthened through the more effective use of existing resources and the development of new methods of work. His delegation welcomed the practice of inviting experts to participate in the substantive debate on selected issues but stressed the need to take into account the principle of equitable geographical distribution in the selection of experts. It supported resolution 40/9, and in particular the recognition in paragraph 16 that the implementation of the Platform for Action in the countries with economies in transition would require continued international cooperation and assistance, in support of national efforts. The specialized agencies should proceed to implement that provision and the decisions of other international forums on assistance to the countries with economies in transition.

Belarus supported the establishment of an international database on violence against women combining material from published and other sources.

Ms. ZHANG Feng Kun (China) said that her delegation fully supported the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. With regard to the

working methods of the Commission on the Status of Women, her delegation felt that the general debate in the Commission was very important and provided an opportunity for delegations from many countries to make statements; the length of that debate should not be shortened. Her delegation hoped that the Commission would devote greater attention to the question of poverty among women, since that issue was of great interest to the international community. Since non-governmental organizations made significant contributions to the work of the Commission, the Council should provide assistance to non-governmental organizations from developing countries so as to enable them to attend meetings of the Commission.

Sister Mary Theresa PLANTE (Franciscans International) said that there were more than 1 million Franciscan women and men in almost every country of the world. They followed a tradition begun by Saint Francis of Assisi, who had emphasized a simple lifestyle, direct service to the poor and needy, a love of creation and a firm commitment to peace among all peoples.

Referring to the report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (E/1996/16), Franciscans International endorsed the statement, in paragraph 60, that, in countries where women were seriously disadvantaged, 60 per cent of country programme resources should be used to increase girls' attendance at school to 50 per cent. In connection with paragraph 234, it believed that the preference for sons should be addressed directly as a harmful attitude and practice and should be linked with female infanticide. The so-called "free market", which relied on unsustainable first world consumption, unregulated transnational corporations, maquiladoras or virtual slave labour, and a third world debt based largely on military spending, and which had produced a worldwide recession, needed to be critically re-examined. Within the parameters of the research on the effects of the internationalization and globalization of economies referred to in paragraph 131, a critique of the free market system itself should be carried out so as to contribute to the formulation of world economies that were sustainable.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.